*Host or designated reader/leader begins the Upper Room prayer hour by reading this message from Fr. David:*

**Message for March 2020**

Dear Friends in Christ:

The “Ideal-Catholic-Life” is within reach. Cooperating with His grace, being intentional about our thoughts, words and actions, will surely lead to greater union with God as one of His children. Let’s be more specific this month in our Upper Rooms and begin to consider, certain very practical aspects of our faith. This time: **The Ideal Catholic Participates in Holy Week**

 In Christ;

Fr. David

*Open with Sign of Cross and pray:*

**Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

L: **Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.**

R: And You shall renew the face of the earth

L: **Let us pray – God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on Your Church to begin the teaching of the Gospel; now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord.**

R: Amen

L: **You, O lord, will open my lips.**

R: And my tongue shall announce Your praise.

L: **Incline unto my aid, O God.**

R: O Lord, make haste to help me.

L: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit**.

R: As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

Holy Week starts with Palm Sunday; here are some questions to discuss about Palm Sunday:

* Where in our culture (or other cultures) do we find people processing together?
* Why is the modelling of the entry into Jerusalem an important piece of the Palm Sunday Liturgy (hint: imagination)?
* Why is using our imaginations or even replicating pieces of Jesus suffering, death and resurrection in our liturgies a key to celebrating Holy Week?
* This is a liturgy (and all the Holy Week Liturgies, with the exception of Good Friday) in which the faithful should understand that it is important to receive from both forms of communion. Why?
* Where do you put the palms in your house?
* How do you dispose of old palms?

Holy Thursday starts the Triduum; here are some questions to discuss about Holy Thursday:

* Why is the Gloria sung tonight?
* Have you ever had your foot/feet washed on Holy Thursday?
* This is another replication to aid our imagination. Think now about who (in life) is completely dependent upon other people to have their feet washed. Do you think a baby or toddler is grateful to the parent type person for washing their feet? Do you think the apostles understood and were grateful? Do you think the people whose feet I wash on Holy Thursday night are grateful? Gratitude is not the point. What is the point?

(Isn’t more about being true to oneself – isn’t it service?)

* The altar of repose? What does that mean? Why do we empty the Church of everything (even the Blessed Sacrament)? The altar of repose is beautiful, it reminds us of another garden from our Genesis. That garden was called? After the Last Supper Jesus and three of his apostles went to pray in this Garden? Another replication/imagination point for the Church on this night is accomplished by having adoration at the altar of repose until Midnight. Why midnight and why adoration? Do you remember what Jesus said to His Apostles in the Garden? Please read Mark 14:32-42. From 8:30 to Midnight we have our altar of repose in the Church Office? “Could you spend one hour with me (Jesus)?”

Good Friday is a solemn day of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, here are some questions to discuss about Good Friday:

* This is nearly the most ancient liturgy for the Roman Church. It hasn’t changed much at all since the 1st Century. Recall as a group the major pieces of the liturgy, (by the way) is Good Friday celebrated with the mass?
* The reading of the Passion happens on both Palm Sunday and Good Friday. What purpose does reading the entire account of the Passion serve the Church, gathered to praise and worship in the context of Holy Week?
* The veneration of the cross is very important to all Catholics. I trust everyone has a Crucifix in their home. Do you know Catholics that don’t? Family members? Can you make an argument (to those who don’t) to the latter people, hypothetically to the Upper Room? That is, what would you say about the crucifix and their homes?
* Why do we leave that liturgy in profound silence?

Holy Saturday is the liturgy where we recognize Jesus being in the tomb and anticipate His rising from the dead, here are some questions to consider about Holy Saturday:

* Another procession. Discussion what happens at the beginning of the liturgy with the blessing of fire, the Easter Candle and what the movement into the Church means.
* The exultet. This is the long chant the Deacon does (8 minutes long). Can you recall some themes? Have someone get this off their cell phone and read to the group. What strikes you from the Exultet?
* The Gloria. We light all the candles during the singing of the Gloria. Why?
* The sacrament of initiation. What are the 3 sacrament of initiation? Why is it a better sign to immerse the elect in the waters than to just pour water over their heads? Those to be confirmed say “I believe and profess all that the Holy, Catholic Church believes, professes and proclaims to be revealed by God” – is this a more powerful profession than the Apostles Creed (that we all do with them)? What is your opinion? Why or why not? We relight our candles for our profession – what does this signify for each one of us?
* The length of this mass. Why do we give this liturgy so much time? What does that signify?
* Is the Easter Mass more solemn than the other Sunday Masses? Why or why not?

The Upper Room will pick up the Easter Season in April. Considering how the **Ideal Catholic celebrates the Easter Solemnities**

**Please Pray the Litany to the Precious Blood of Jesus**

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| Lord, have mercy. *(Lord, have mercy.)* Christ, have mercy. *(Christ, have mercy.)* Lord, have mercy. *(Lord, have mercy.)* Christ, hear us. *(Christ, hear us.)* Christ, graciously hear us. *(Christ, graciously hear us.)* God the Father of Heaven, *(have mercy on us.)* God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *(have mercy on us.)* God, the Holy Spirit, *(have mercy on us.)* Holy Trinity, One God, *(have mercy on us.)*  |
| Blood of Christ, only-begotten Son of the eternal Father, Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God, Blood of Christ, of the New and Eternal Testament, Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in Agony, Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging, Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns, Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross, Blood of Christ, price of our salvation, Blood of Christ, without which there is no forgiveness, Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls, Blood of Christ, stream of mercy, Blood of Christ, victor over demons, Blood of Christ, courage of Martyrs, Blood of Christ, strength of Confessors, Blood of Christ, bringing forth Virgins, Blood of Christ, help of those in peril, Blood of Christ, relief of the burdened, Blood of Christ, solace in sorrow, Blood of Christ, hope of the penitent, Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying, Blood of Christ, peace and tenderness of hearts, Blood of Christ, pledge of eternal life, Blood of Christ, freeing souls from purgatory, Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and honor,  | *save us* |
| Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *(spare us, O Lord.)* Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *(graciously hear us, O Lord.)* Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *(have mercy on us, O Lord.)* Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy Blood. *(And made us, for our God, a kingdom.)* Let us pray. Almighty and eternal God, Thou hast appointed Thine only-begotten Son the Redeemer of the world and willed to be appeased by his blood. Grant, we beg of Thee, that we may worthily adore this price of our salvation and through its power be safeguarded from the evils of the present life so that we may rejoice in its fruits forever in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. *(Amen.)* |